

**Mount Royal Faculty Association
Department Communicators Brunch
January 5, 2012**

1. Introductions

Kit Dobson, MRFA Secretary and Chair of the Communications Committee

While these sessions are for the MRFA to communicate current work of the Association, we hope to hear from Department Communicators about things going on in their departments. We want to know what members want addressed.

2. Executive Board Report

Gerry Cross, MRFA President

- *Building a Stronger Association*
 - This afternoon and tomorrow we have a professional officer from CAUT here to do a workshop on *Building a Stronger Association*. We would like to invite all of Communicators to attend any part of this as you wish.
 - This is what department communicators are all about: building a stronger MRFA.
 - Workshop schedules available if interested
 - If you are able to join us for part of this workshop please let Gerry know so he can email you the pre-reading which is a discussion paper by Jim Turk that compares the traditional model of a Faculty Association which provides services to members with what they describe as the organizing or mobilizing part of the Association. He argues need to move toward more mobilization/organization of members because PSE is under threat from the external environment and we need to work to defend it.
- Communicating with and Engaging Members
 - We need to consider what initiatives the Association can pursue to engage members
 - We hope to use Department Communicators more effectively to better engage members
 - In August we asked Department Communicators to bring draft visions to discuss with departments. This process provided a lot of useful feedback; however, we were trying to do much more than just get input. The process is more important than the outcome. We want members to think of what they want the MRFA. We hoped that, through this, departments could become more involved in the Association.
 - We want the Department Communicators to be a two way communication channel. It is much more important for Department Communicators to bring issues to us than for us to fan information out through Communicators.
- Attendance at MRFA Meetings
 - At a minimum there should be one person from each department at general meetings.
 - January 30 general meeting is going to be devoted largely to the work of FEC on SEIs
 - This is a valuable conversation we need to engage in and it is also very controversial: we hope many faculty attend.
- Discussion
 - Notion of changes to workload and the academic year and contractual requirements. Right now, we are probably the only institution left that has as much vacation time as we do. Where can we have this discussion?
 - The task force has two consultations scheduled: Tuesday January 10 from 12:00 – 2:00pm and from 4:30-6:30pm
 - The Task Force on Leaves and the Academic Year will be reporting out and will allow some time for discussion. The task force will also be surveying faculty.
 - The Collective Agreement stipulates that faculty have two months of vacation: the only way this can be changed is through negotiations. Certainly nothing is going to change in this regard in the current round of negotiations. But, we are still in transition.
 - Robin said some people would like to have flexibility to do research in the summer
 - This is not the purpose of the task force it will not make recommendations concerning this. The task force may make recommendations on moving work out of intercession (e.g. annual tenure reviews)

- In negotiations the MRFA team represents our members: the Negotiating Committee spends an enormous amount of time determining what it is that members want and then acts within those parameters. If a majority of faculty were to at some point express desire to change things like this the negotiating committee would consider it.
- This is part of building a stronger association. We cannot just leave things to rest on the shoulders of a few people on committees; we need to focus on what we are all doing as members to contribute and work together towards something.

3. Negotiations Report

1. Department Communicators Information Session: the Grievance Process

- It is important for our members to be better informed on the Grievance Process
 - The Executive thought this could provide a way to mobilize us an association
 - Most of our grievances have to do with Part-time appointment
 - Grievances are often seen as negative and confrontational but grievances are simply a formal resolution process: it is not adversarial.
- We are considering having a session on the Grievance process for Department Communicators but open, more broadly, to all members. We hope to inform you about what the grievance process is and what it is not and to give you an idea of how grievances are worked out.
 - When Department Communicators see issues coming up in their departments they can communicate this to the Executive and/or council members on their rights and the actual purpose of the grievance process
 - This would be useful for all members especially new members
 - This session will be offered sometime this semester
- Discussion
 - It would be nice to hear more of the process
 - Is the goal here to use the process more strategically?
 - It is to better handle matters as they arise and also to make us aware of endemic issues
 - The Executive is starting to compile grievances and results so we can notice trends and solve problems proactively
 - Using the grievance process more effectively in terms of reporting can have a large impact on preventing future grievances
 - The MRFA should be doing something to protect academic freedom and pedagogy in the classroom.
 - New faculty in the tenure process should not just do what they are told to do because they are at risk of reprimand. This fear still exists and members are restricted by it.
 - There are violations that nobody does anything about for fear of consequences. Thing will become more positive as we make members more aware of their rights.
 - Unless the Executive comes around to departments the message may not come across.
 - The Executive will consider this.
 - This is a good idea but keeping our Department Communicators informed is a large part of informing members of rights and processes.

2. David Sabiston, 1st Vice President

- The Survey:
 - It would be best for every member to respond
 - We hear from the same people all the time but we want to hear what the majority feel about the issues.
 - The results of this survey are very important in negotiations
 - We are going to allow everyone the chance to look through the questions and Collective Agreement one week before starting the survey
- Workload Survey
 - We will be asking every faculty member to log one week's work at Mount Royal

- We did this 10 years ago and it was useful
- We are hearing from members that workload is significantly increased
- This will come out in the second week of February
- Discussion:
 - There are workload differences in the Fall and the Winter. Will this be done in the Fall also?
 - There will be place in the survey to state whether the week is a common week and how it is different from other weeks
 - We will consider doing this more often than once every 10 years
 - What is the purpose?
 - We want to go into negotiations with the results. We also want to see where faculty are spending their time: to see if the proportions are as they should be.
 - How important is it for the submissions to be accurate? (the results could be inflated numbers).
 - If we did this more often we would have a better idea of accuracy but we would still find it useful to see the hours because we know for a fact that workload has increased through the transition.
 - Is the survey going to gauge opinions on changes to the academic year?
 - We can open anything we want to in the Collective Agreement and so can the Board's team, and either group may not get what they want.
 - This could be asked in the survey.
 - Scholarship stream: concerns with evaluating scholarly process/progress.
 - Performance management is the responsibility of the Dean
 - Chair has leadership role to mentor faculty
 - All faculty have criteria for promotion. The standards for promotion are higher than the standards for tenure. A normal career path moving forward would include more work than achieving tenure. People are accountable to themselves in this also.

3. Gerard Lucyshyn, Part-time Member Representative

- We hope that the Department Communicators encourage Part-time members to respond to the survey. Many Part-time members do not know they are full members of the association, that they are welcome in the faculty centre, or that they can respond to the survey. This is a significant disenfranchisement for our Part-time members.
 - Grievance issues come about from a lack of understanding in how the Part-time appointment process should work. Many of these problems have been resolved by better education of chairs and Part-time Standing Committees. In some areas the process was very new and difficult.
- Survey
 - As usual there will be questions for Part-time faculty on the survey. This year we are going to specifically highlight the different sections of the survey for Part-time/Full time members.
 - We started to add language from the Collective Agreement to the survey to make it easier for members, but the survey times. So we are giving members a week to review the questions and the Collective Agreement
- What about Part-time members who do not teach in all terms?
 - Part-time members remain members for 18 months after having taught. The MRFA maintains a full list of its Part-time members.
 - We cannot know who has responded precisely because the survey is meant to be anonymous. We cannot send out in any other way.
 - If people are being missed because they do not check their email there is not much we can do about it. Department Communicators could talk with their admin assistants to see who is here normally but not currently.

4. Committee Updates

- We have sent recommendations to the bylaws committee to include the Department Communicators in the bylaws.

Announcements

Spring 2012 PD Retreat, Save the Date! May 15-16

The call for proposals has been sent out. The deadline is in February

Reading Week PD Day, Save the date: February 22, 2012

The topic will be “the future of the book”

PD Pages: Books, Banter and Beverages. January 24, 2012

The Committee is trying to select books of general interest. This book will be *The Spirit Level*.

Winter 2012 MRFA Meeting Schedule

Monday, January 30, 2012 4:00-5:50pm. Location: Y224

Thursday, March 1, 2012. 3:00-5:00pm. Location: LPR (J301)

Tuesday, April 3, 2012. 2:00-3:50pm. Location: Y224

AGM: May 11, 9:00 - 2:00. Location: Jenkins Theatre (I115)